

# HUMAN LICE

Arizona Department of Corrections  
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program  
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Head and pubic lice (crabs) both appear on the hair and skin as tiny yellow brown to dark gray spots that measure about one-eighth inch. Lice lay eggs called nits. Nits appear as white or yellow spots that are attached to hair shafts touching or close to the skin.

Depending on temperature, nits usually hatch within seven to ten days. Nits are bound securely to human hair by a secretion from female lice. This substance is strong enough so that nits cannot be dislodged from the hair by ordinary washing. They can only be removed by combing with a special fine-toothed comb.

## HOW PEOPLE GET HEAD LICE

- Head lice are most commonly spread by direct contact with an infested person and are usually found on the hair above the ears, the back of the scalp, and the crown of the head.
- They are spread indirectly from wearing other people's infested clothing.
- They are also spread by sharing combs and brushes, wearing other people's hats/caps, by using other's towels, bed linens, pillows, and radio earphones.

## HOW PEOPLE GET PUBIC LICE (CRABS)

- Sexual contact is the most common means of getting pubic lice.
- Crabs may also be acquired through shared bedding, clothing and towels. Crabs can spread from contact with infested clothing.

- Crabs can be found under the armpits, in the beard or moustache and even rarely on the eyebrows and eyelashes.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Itching and scratching of the head and back of the neck.
- The presence white, yellow or gray spots that are not easily removed with the hand or a comb.

## TREATMENT

Lice can be killed by a number of chemicals: Your medical provider will determine the safest treatment for you.

Lice cause much discomfort to humans due to their irritating bites. Scratching often leads to secondary bacterial infections. Lice do not feed on dirt; they feed on blood! It is important to seek medical attention if you think you have lice.

## Prevention

- Don't share hair brushes, combs, radio headphones, head gear or clothing.
- Don't have intimate contact with infested persons.

Anyone can get lice. A person can be infected with lice even if they are clean and have good personal hygiene.

Lice can be found in any length hair, whether it is clean or dirty.

Contrary to popular belief, lice cannot fly or jump.

***To get lice, you must touch someone or something that has lice.***